



# REFORMED

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*For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion:  
in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me;  
he shall set me up upon a rock.*

—Psalm 27:5

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## MEDITATION

And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness which may be felt. And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven; and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days: they saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days: but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings. And Pharaoh called unto Moses, and said, Go ye, serve the LORD; only let your flocks and your herds be stayed: let your little ones also go with you. And Moses said, Thou must give us also sacrifices and burnt offerings, that we may sacrifice unto the LORD our God. Our cattle also shall go with us; there shall not an hoof be left behind; for thereof must we take to serve the LORD our God; and we know not with what we must serve the LORD, until we come thither. But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he would not let them go. And Pharaoh said unto him, Get thee from me, take heed to thyself, see my face no more; for in that day thou seest my face thou shalt die. And Moses said, Thou hast spoken well, I will see thy face again no more.

—Exodus 10:21–29

**G**od did not announce the ninth plague to Pharaoh. Moses, at God's command, stretched out his hand toward heaven, and the ninth plague fell suddenly upon the land of Egypt for three days.

Ninth plague: darkness.

The darkness of the ninth plague was no ordinary darkness. It was a special darkness that God unleashed upon the earth only twice in the history of the world. Try as one might, no man could close his eyes and imagine the darkness of the ninth plague. Try as one might, no man could replicate the darkness of the ninth plague. Even if a man, with no light source whatsoever, on the blackest of midnights, would enter into a house with no windows, descend the stairs to a hidden basement deep underground, climb through a trap door down a ladder into a cellar underneath the basement, and seal himself in a cement vault in the corner of the cellar, where no ray of light could possibly penetrate—that man still would not even be close to understanding the darkness of the ninth plague.

The ninth plague was a “thick darkness.” The ninth plague was a “darkness which may be felt.” The ninth plague was a darkness which immobilized the Egyptians, so that not a single Egyptian

“rose any from his place” on his bed or his couch. The ninth plague was a darkness which separated the Egyptians, so that they “saw not one another” though they were husband and wife lying in the same bed. For three days there was no sunlight, no moonlight, no starlight, no candlelight. Nowhere in all the earth is there darkness like this. Never in all the world had such a darkness been known. Not even on the first day of creation, before God had made light, was there such a darkness as the darkness of the ninth plague.

What was the terrible darkness of the ninth plague? The darkness of the ninth plague was the darkness that our Lord calls “outer darkness” (Matt. 25:30). Outer darkness is hell. Outer darkness is that realm that God has made as the cauldron of his curse. God casts his enemies into outer darkness (22:13). In outer darkness there is weeping (25:30). In outer darkness there is gnashing of teeth (8:12). When God plunged Egypt into darkness, God plunged Egypt into hell. God's curse was always in the houses of the Egyptians, but for three days of darkness the Egyptians lay under the terror and anguish of that curse.

The darkness terrified Pharaoh. When God lifted the darkness after three days, Pharaoh

called unto Moses and told Israel to go serve the Lord. All the people should go. Even the little ones. Pharaoh only asked that the Israelites' flocks and herds stay back, as a pledge that Israel would return. When Moses informed Pharaoh that God, not Pharaoh, was sovereign over Israel's worship and that therefore all the animals must go as well, Pharaoh was furious. He cast Moses from him with the threat that Moses would see Pharaoh's face no more lest Moses die. Pharaoh was right that Moses would see his face no more, but Pharaoh was grievously mistaken about who would die.

But let us return to the darkness a moment to see what became of Israel when God plunged Egypt into the darkness of the abyss. All the children of Israel had light in their dwellings. Their light was not merely the pale flicker of a candle or the rosy glow of the hearth. Their

light was the true light of heaven. Their light was Jesus Christ, who is the light of the world and who dwelt with his people in Egypt.

And how was it that Israel could escape the darkness, though they were sinners like the Egyptians? Ah, here we must briefly see the second time that God sent this special outer darkness upon the earth. The first time, God sent the outer darkness of hell upon Egypt for three days. The second time, God sent the outer darkness of hell upon Jesus Christ for three hours as he hung upon the cross. And, enduring the darkness of God's curse for all of his elect, our Lord is the light of the world that illuminates his church.

"The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined" (Isa. 9:2).

—AL

## FROM THE EDITOR

**A** cordial and hearty greeting to all the readers of *Reformed Pavilion* as the year draws to a close. Your interest in the matters that appear on the pages of the magazine is a great encouragement to the writers and editors. It has been a joy and a privilege from God to write this year. We may occupy only a little corner in the world of religious publishing, but God has given us this great truth about which to write: God is God! In salvation God is God, and man is not God! In worship God is God,

and man is not God! There is nothing grander than this.

As the Lord brings us into a new year, may he continue to establish us upon his truth and give us the joy and happiness of our salvation in Christ.

"LORD, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations" (Ps. 90:1).

—AL



## Article XXXVIII. The Fallen King and His Kingdom (continued)

**A**fter the flood mankind enters upon a new era, upon a new historical dispensation. There is a very distinct difference between the prediluvian and the post-diluvian periods, a difference which it is essential to see clearly would we understand the development of mankind after the flood in distinction from that of the prediluvian race. Even as the distinction between the dispensations before and after Christ must be borne in mind for a correct understanding of the new dispensation, so also it is of importance that we remember how after the flood humanity entered upon a new period of development.

Intentionally we say that mankind, humanity entered upon a new era.

The separation caused by the flood was, of course, not an absolute separation between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. Such an absolute separation cannot be accomplished in time. It is God's will and wisdom that the whole human race as it finds its root in Adam develop organically, and that the life of the seed of the woman and that of the seed of the serpent are closely intertwined. Together they exist and develop. Together they belong to the same human race. Together they have a common life, enjoy common blessings, live in the same spheres of life. And they shall not be separated definitely and absolutely till the time of the final judgment. And although the judgment of the flood was final in a sense, final with respect to the old world and the prediluvian dispensation; and although as such it is typical of the judgment that will mark the end of this world; yet it should

never be forgotten that it was not final with regard to the human race as it exists in this dispensation of sin and grace. In the ark the human race was saved from the destruction of the flood. True, also in the ark that human race existed for the sake of the woman's seed. Also in the ark the race was borne on the strength of the holy seed. It was because Noah was a righteous man that all the human race was not destroyed in the flood. But, however true this may be, the fact remains, that not only the seed of the woman but also the seed of the serpent was perpetuated for the time being in the ark of salvation. Or, if you please, the human race as it was under the influence of the power of sin on the one hand, and of the principle of grace on the other was present in the ark. That this is true is plain from all that we read in Scripture concerning the little family that became the progenitors of the second world. Noah is a righteous man, and the principle of grace is operating in his heart. But that he is not delivered from the power of sin in his members is plain when he becomes intoxicated and exposes himself to the mockery of Ham and Canaan. And as to the three sons, there is from the very start a very marked difference between Shem in whom the line of the covenant is to be perpetuated for a time, while Japheth is to share in his blessings, and Ham, who reveals his carnal nature and becomes object of the patriarchal curse. The same human race, then, as before the flood, under the influence of the power of sin and the principle of grace is present in the ark, and according to these two principles the organism of the race is to develop also in the future. Also in the future the development

of the race will be along organic lines. Also in the future the seed of the woman will constitute the real heart and core of the organism, for whose sake also the seed of the serpent exist and develop. Also in the future we must expect, that the principle of sin will develop along the organic line of the progress of the race.

But although it is the same human race, developing along the same organic line under the twofold influence of sin and grace, it is an entirely different dispensation than before the flood. That this is true is evident already from Gen. 8:21. When Jehovah smelled the sweet savor of Noah's offering He said in his heart: "I will not again curse the ground anymore for man's sake, for that the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite anymore everything living, as I have done." What draws our attention in this passage is especially that the fact of man's depravity from his youth is here mentioned as a reason why the Lord will not again send a judgment like the flood to destroy everything living. Before the flood this was the very reason stated for the sending of the deluge. For in Gen. 6:5-7 we read: "And Jehovah saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented Jehovah that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And Jehovah said, I will destroy man, whom I have created, from the face of the ground; both man and beast and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for it repenteth me that I have made them." There is, therefore, an apparent contradiction. Before the catastrophe of the flood it was man's wickedness that formed the reason for the judgment; after the flood, it seems as if man's depravity would be the reason for the promise that the judgment shall be postponed. Only if we remember that the Lord intends to control and guide the development of the race in the postdiluvian period in a manner different from that of the first world, can we understand this apparent contradiction. The meaning evidently is: 1. Man is depraved.

From his youth up he is evil. It may be expected, therefore, that the principle of sin will develop again in the future as it did in the past. 2. If the Lord would allow the race to develop once more as freely as in the prediluvian period, he would be constrained to send another catastrophe within a comparatively short time, and the normal development of His covenant would be greatly impeded. 3. Hence, the Lord will inaugurate a new dispensation, a new era; he will place the progress of the race under control, so that it will not be possible for sin to develop as quickly as in the first world. 4. In this way a catastrophe like the deluge will not be necessary till the end of the world.

If we bear this in mind we will also be able to understand how the Lord could promise immediately after the deluge that no such catastrophe should be sent again until the end of the world. "While the earth remaineth seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease." And this same promise is revealed in Gen. 9:9-17 in covenant form. This could not possibly mean that iniquity would again develop as quickly as before the deluge and that the Lord would simply ignore it, for this was impossible. As soon as the world is ripe for judgment it will meet its final catastrophe, just as well as was the case with the prediluvian world. But this entire promise is based on the supposition that sin will not develop again with such tremendous strides as it did in the first world. And again, this is possible only if life in its entirety is placed under a different control, is subject to a restraint that was not present in the period before the deluge. Evident it is, then, that the human race begins a new period of development, that it enters upon an era materially different from the time when the sons of God married the daughters of men.

The difference did not consist in this that before the flood the blessings of God's grace flowed abundantly also upon the seed of the serpent, while after the flood only the seed of the woman receive these blessings. Neither is the difference such that in the prediluvian age

the blessings flowed more abundantly than after the flood. The outward blessings of God are very emphatically promised, and it is emphasized that they shall flow continually and that there shall not again be such an interruption as the deluge. But the difference is exactly this, that while in the first world life was not placed under restraint, this restraint becomes evident immediately after the deluge. In the first place, the animal world is placed under control. It is difficult to conceive of the conditions of the animal world in relation to man before the flood. Certain it is, that the fall of man as king of the world must have revealed its effect upon the world of animals. It is not impossible that before the deluge mighty and gigantic creatures were found among the animals as well as among men. And the animal recognizing the loss of man's control and not being placed under special restraint before the flood might have wrought havoc among men. This is changed immediately after the deluge. "And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every bird of the heavens; with all wherewith the ground teemeth, and all the fishes of the sea, into your hand are they delivered." Gen. 9:2. But also the life of men in their mutual relation to one another is placed under restraint. Before the flood Cain could kill Abel and Lamech could revenge himself seventy times seven times without meeting the proper punishment. And no doubt, at the time of Enoch more than one of God's faithful witnesses met with violent death at the hand of the seed of the serpent. It was the reign of the mighty. There was no government. But immediately after the flood a change is introduced also in this respect and man's life is placed under the restraint of government. For that this is the meaning of Gen. 9:6 is rather generally acknowledged. "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for

in the image of God made He man." That this is not to be understood as a prophetic utterance is plain from the fact that it occurs in the midst of instructions to the race. Neither can it signify that the act of retaliation should be left to the personal choice of the individual, for it is exactly against such a condition of anarchy under which only the mighty could retaliate and take revenge that the command is here given. It can imply nothing less than that the Lord here places the sword in the hand of man, that is, that He institutes government, and gives to man authority over others. Men in their mutual relation are to be under the restraint of government in the postdiluvian period. And in the third place we may notice that a noticeable restraint is placed upon man's development by the decline of the ages. Before the flood man reached the age of almost a thousand years. But in the line of the postdiluvian patriarchs we notice that the ages are rather suddenly shortened, so that Abraham, the tenth after Noah, dies at the age of 175 years. The significance of this decline can hardly be overestimated. It was a check upon man's development in every way, a check too upon his development in sin and iniquity. Presently still another restraint is placed upon the development of the race, when men attempt to establish Babel's kingdom. About this, however, we shall write another time.

Now it must be clear that the postdiluvian dispensation differs considerably from the prediluvian. Life was now bound. It was now led into definite channels. It was placed under restraint on every side. And being restrained the power of sin could not develop as fast as it did before the flood. It would be far more gradually that the world would ripen for judgment. And there would be no need again for a catastrophe like the flood.

—Holland, Mich.

